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ABSTRACT

To carry out an affirmative action policy, school districts should base hiring practices on educational goals that aim at acceptance of people as human beings not as minority group members. The hiring practices should employ minority group people to recruit minority candidates for professional and nonprofessional positions, clearly defining qualifications required. After employment, human relations principles can be used to solve intergroup problems, to involve minority people in school and community activities, to open and maintain communication lines, and to assist minority people with difficulties in the community. (Author/DW)

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Ten Guidelines For Recruiting, Hiring and Retaining Minority Group School Employees

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Michigan Association

of

School Administrators

Social Issues Committee

1972-73

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Preface

This brochure is intended to be of assistance to school administrators as they face an important challenge of our time.

The Michigan Association of School Administrators' Committee on Social Issues believes that the education community has a responsibility to implement the principles of fair employment and to help prepare young people for the multi-racial world in which they live. For this reason, the committee has decided to focus on the issue of hiring minority group employees, both professional and non-professional.

As a basis for preparing this document, the committee conducted a hearing at Michigan State University January 31, 1973, at which representatives of the following institutions testified concerning their beliefs and practices in the field of minority employment: Chrysler Institute, East Lansing Public Schools, Michigan AFL-CIO, Michigan Bell Telephone Company, Michigan Department of Education, Michigan Education Association, Michigan Federation of Teachers, Michigan State Chamber of Commerce, Michigan State University, and the University of Michigan.

In addition, committee members have read numerous publications on the subject and have talked at length with both minority group and non-minority group individuals.

The committee is prepared now to present a list of ten guidelines that a district must follow if it is to carry out an affirmative program for minority group hiring.

Guidelines

1. The school district should adopt an affirmative hiring policy based upon educational goals.

2. The school district should analyze and evaluate all professional and non-professional openings that currently exist and should consider placing minority group members in them.

3. The school district should undertake a realistic recruiting program by arranging on-site visits to universities with concentrations of minority

candidates, by advertising so that minority candidates will be informed and feel welcome to apply, and by using student teacher programs as a fertile recruiting source.

4. The school district should have on its recruiting teams minority group persons who are regular members of the staff.

5. The school district should define clearly qualifications required to fit openings and should be completely honest regarding what the job entails, what demands will be made upon the applicant, and what the expectations are in terms of professional performance.

6. The school district should inform minority applicants of difficulties they might face in terms of minority group status in the district.

7. The school district should insure that communication lines are kept clear and open, that problems are solved as they are met or prevented if they can be anticipated, and that minority candidates are absorbed into the total team as quickly as possible.

8. The school district should help the community to become familiar with the contributions of minority group persons by inviting them to speak to both lay and professional audiences on topics quite apart from minority group problems.

9. The school district should undertake a human relations program in the district that addresses itself to group problems.

10. The school district should set as its ultimate goal the acceptance of people as human beings and not as minority group members.

Implementation

1. The school district should adopt an affirmative hiring policy based upon educational goals.

"It is vital that everyone in the organization knows where management stands on minority hiring and training, and that it is a matter of corporate policy to make affirmative moves in this area. Therefore, you must first start with a statement of policy . . . make a commitment . . . and communicate

with your organization. At Chrysler Corporation this is what we have done."

Donald Maxwell, Manager
Technical Education
Chrysler Institute
M.A.S.A. Hearing, January 31, 1973

You are a superintendent of schools. As chief executive responsible for hiring, you believe in equal job opportunity for all. You allow no discrimination in your district. But few or none of your staff are Black, Chicano, Asian or American Indian. You can improve your non-discrimination posture by translating your beliefs into action. What should you do?

You are a superintendent of schools. As chief executive you are responsible for an educational program that prepares youth for their future. They will perhaps live and work in a Michigan whose total population is now 14% minorities, in a United States whose population is now 13% minorities, and in a world where white persons constitute a minority. But the fact is that few or none of your teachers or administrators are Black, Chicano, Asian or American Indian. You can better prepare your students for a multi-racial world by having your staff represent a cross section of the people of our state and nation. What should you do?

Your M.A.S.A. Social Issues Committee believes that one of the first things your district should do is to adopt an affirmative hiring policy. This will establish in writing just what your district expects regarding the inclusion of minority persons on your staff. The policy will state clearly the district's beliefs in an affirmative hiring program and the main reasons for that belief. As with any policy of the Board of Education, it will give broad direction to the superintendent and staff as to the expectations of the school district.

The policy should include some or all of the following statements:

a. The district shall not discriminate for reasons of race, sex or religious beliefs in the recruitment and selection process. (This is a fair employment statement.)

b. The district shall seek applicants of all ethnic, racial, and religious backgrounds. (This authorizes an active rather than a passive responsibility for administration.)

c. The district's needs, and most especially

the needs for the complete education of children, are best met by a staff that is representative of all ethnic, racial, and religious backgrounds. (This establishes the educational goal.)

d. The district's goal shall be to include a representative staff in all types of positions in each building and at the central office. (This establishes your district's plan to be inclusive at all levels.)

e. The district should announce professional job opportunities to staff members, to placement bureaus which serve the school system, and to key educational leaders of the community, including those representing minority groups. (This underscores the active posture of the district in seeking minority applicants.)

2. The school district should analyze and evaluate all professional and non-professional openings that currently exist and should consider placing minority group members in them.

"There ought to be inclusion at every level of the educational community—administration, teaching ranks, employment at all levels of school operating, whatever the function happens to be—of minority groups in proportion to their numbers in that community."

John Ryor, President
Michigan Education Association
M.A.S.A. Hearing, January 31, 1973

Once a superintendent and Board have committed the district to a policy of increasing the employment of minority group members, the policy must be carried out at all levels of employment. For too long, there has been the kind of job stereotyping that places members of minority groups only in low-level positions. Supervisory positions, positions of responsibility and influence have too often been denied them.

A superintendent must adequately inform and demonstrate to all staff that the decision to hire minority group members for any opening is sanctioned, without reservation, by the Board of Education through its affirmative hiring policy.

The superintendent must also insure the fact that once a minority person is hired, the ability to move upward is guaranteed. It is one thing to open the door, but it is another to be able to move up the ladder on one's own ability after one gets inside the door. The superintendent must be prepared to meet any objections that might arise if minority persons are placed in positions that necessitate their supervision of white employees.

3. The school district should undertake a realistic recruiting program by arranging on-site visits to universities with concentrations of minority candidates, by advertising openings so that minority candidates will be informed and feel welcome to apply, and by using student teacher programs as a fertile recruiting source.

> *"If you're going to find bass, you're going to have to go where the bass are. We couldn't find Black students in schools in Michigan; so, consequently, we went to the schools that were predominantly Black and found enough to integrate the staffs in all of the system."*
>
> *"They (some school districts) have a cooperative arrangement with predominantly Black schools for a student teacher setup. They bring minority people into the community to do their student teaching. Upon graduation, if these people have shown that they have the aptitude to be the type of teacher that they want there, they bring them back into the community as staff members."*
>
> *Clyde W. Briggs, Manager*
> *Recruitment and Counseling*
> *The University of Michigan*
> *M.A.S.A. Hearing, January 31, 1973*

Where can a superintendent find a large number of potential minority teachers, administrators and counselors?

The inability of some school recruiters to find minority educators may be due to looking in the wrong places. For example, the best sources for graduating Black teachers are no doubt the 100 plus Black colleges. It has been through the field of education that Black college graduates have found an outlet for their talents and financial reward for their efforts. In the March, 1969, edition of **School Management**, reference is made to a report of the National Education Association that stated there

were 170,000 Black teachers in the United States or 8½% of the instructional force. The article, "The Elusive Black Educator," further indicated that half of all Black college graduates enter education.

With a majority of new, Black college graduates seeking employment in public schools, it would appear that both the problem of finding Black student teachers and teaching candidates is manageable. Establishing rapport with placement officers and faculty members of Black schools of education will pay off in obtaining Black staff members.

Similarly, there are recommended geographical locations for minority educators of other groups. For Chicanos and American Indians, it may be more fruitful to recruit in the Southwest. Asians are found in greater numbers in the West. There are also professional sources, such as the recruiting and placement service of the MEA Division of Minority Affairs in East Lansing, Michigan, and the computerized services of Quality Education Employment Development (QEED) in Hartford, Connecticut.

4. The school district should have on its recruiting teams minority group persons who are regular members of the staff.

> *"People want to know what it is like in your district, how are housing conditions? If you have walked in their shoes, so to speak, then you can communicate with them."*
>
> *Jeffery A. Moss*
> *Consultant for Minority Staffing*
> *East Lansing School District*
> *M.A.S.A. Hearing, January 31, 1973*

One of the basic challenges to the school superintendent who wants to bring about a more inclusive kind of staff is that the district must be made more credible to minority applicants. There has been such a long history of job discrimination in education that minority candidates can be expected to adopt something of a "show me" attitude, especially if there are few or no minority staff members in your district.

The lack of credibility is one of the major reasons why minority candidates do not apply to some districts. They think they may be wasting their time, that maybe you're trying to put on a show, or that you want to hire one token minority person. They believe these things because they have so

often been true. A minority person on your recruiting or interviewing team will help to allay suspicions.

Minority candidates may have some concerns that need straight answers in the interviewing process. Such questions as, "What is the housing picture?" or "What is the social scene?" have special meanings for minority persons. The answers to these questions are likely to be more believable when they come from a minority staff member.

Minority applicants are going to be interested in the kind of school and community situation they will be going into. Chances are that they don't expect instantaneous perfection. They know that helpful attitudes and mutual understanding with other staff and with parents may take some work on both sides, but they want to know what it's really going to be like. A minority staff member on the recruiting or interviewing team will be able to field those questions with candor.

5. The school district should define clearly qualifications required to fit openings and should be completely honest regarding what the job entails, what demands will be made upon the applicant, and what the expectations are in terms of professional performance.

> *"We have a centralized situation where, whenever a job vacancy becomes available, the employer submits to us a job requisition stating the minimum qualifications, the pay rate, and capsuled description telling what the job will entail. We try to get the best qualified person and thus to insure equal employment opportunity for all people."*
>
> *Ms. Sandra Huggins*
> *Personnel Department*
> *Michigan State University*
> *M.A.S.A. Hearing, January 31, 1973*

A superintendent who wants the new minority employees to succeed will make sure that they know before they take the job exactly what is expected of them. It is asking for problems to bring in minority group persons without giving them a clear-cut description of what the job entails and what qualifications are necessary to carry out the work.

In hiring minorities, a superintendent should be well aware of the general and specific attitudes carried by the white employees. During the interview, the recruiter should relate to the potential minority employee the general attitude that exists in the school or in the office. A minority person

should know in advance the degree of potential acceptance or non-acceptance of a minority person in a particular area.

During the interview, the recruiter should emphasize that anyone who meets the qualifications and is subsequently hired will have the full support of the superintendent as long as the person performs well on the job. There can be no vacillating in the decision to stand firm behind a minority employee who is performing adequately on the job, even though the presence of a minority employee might displease some of the other employees.

6. The school district should inform minority applicants of difficulties they might face in terms of minority group status in the school district.

> *"I need to know as a family man what the life will be for my family in that community. I need a minority person, in my case a Black, to be able to tell me exactly what I can expect if I make a job change."*
>
> *Frank Ferguson*
> *Michigan Chamber of Commerce*
> *M.A.S.A. Hearing, January 31, 1973*

Although many overt racial barriers have been removed, there remain hidden, subtle examples of prejudice and discrimination. The obstacles that remain may be the conscious or unconscious reactions of whites to new laws, court rulings, or practices. For instance, the commonly repeated reluctance of white real estate salesmen to show Blacks homes in white neighborhoods is an example of an invisible barrier. More difficult to define are negative social situations for minorities that arise due to ignorance.

The lack of knowledge on the part of whites involves not understanding the many implications of being a racial minority. The problem for minority group persons is the threat of the new opportunity amidst what was formerly unrealistic expectations. For example, Black educators have traditionally been conservative about changing job locations, particularly as related to entering white communities. The sophistication about relocation that is common among white professionals is more likely to be absent from the comparable Black group. A key concern for the Black educator is how well the family will adjust to the new setting.

Information should be given early to minority candidates about schools, housing, shopping centers,

and community resources. A visit, perhaps dinner, with a local minority group family might be of benefit to the minority candidate. Another helpful gesture is an introduction to local lending institutions, especially the school employees credit union.

The key to successful recruiting, hiring and retaining of minority group educators and their families is the development of an acute sensitivity to the peculiar demands upon minority group persons.

7. The school district should insure that communication lines are kept clear and open, that problems are solved as they are met or prevented if they can be anticipated, and that minority candidates are absorbed into the total team as quickly as possible.

> *"I have found that I have had no difficulty in relating to other minorities, and they don't seem reluctant to talk to me, not only in recruiting but also those who are presently employed by the department. They haven't shown any hesitancy to come in and talk to me about some of their problems."*
>
> *Larry Hackney*
> *Michigan Department of Education*
> *M.A.S.A. Hearing, January 31, 1973*

Now that minority persons are joining your faculty, clerical and maintenance staffs, you will need to plan for certain follow-up activities. Having made an investment of time and energy, and perhaps dollars, to create a more balanced and representative staff, you will want to protect that investment by taking steps to deal with some of the problems that you can anticipate.

Some administrators, perhaps most, will be wary of dealing with minority professionals. They may recognize their own bias now, or recall the prejudices of their youth, and as a result, feel awkward as they work with minority group persons. The principal or supervisor may be afraid of a verbal slip and, not wishing to be insensitive, may talk around a problem, leaving the minority group person puzzled and fearful. Both parties should have access to someone who can help resolve problems as they arise.

Most problems are resolved readily when attitudes come across as positive and when people show a desire to be helpful. Mutual respect for individual differences, a degree of openness and candor, and a recognition of the other's needs go a long way toward resolving interpersonal problems.

A conscious effort should be made to absorb new minority staff members into both the professional and social activities that each school carries on. However, don't expect that all invitations will be immediately and warmly accepted. Some minority persons need time. Many have had experiences that have hurt, experiences in which an invitation to join or to take part really turned out to be an invitation to come as "a member of your race" and not as an individual human being.

Monitoring how your new minority staffing situation is going will be important to you. You will want to find out on a regular basis how your new staff members are doing, how they feel, and what they think about their situation. As with any monitoring activity, it is best done openly and with clear understanding of purpose. Its great importance to you is that you and others will have an opportunity to be helpful when help is needed, to prevent problems before they arise, or to deal with little problems before they get to be big ones.

8. The school district should help the community to become familiar with the contributions of minority group persons by inviting them to speak to both lay and professional audiences on topics quite apart from minority group problems.

"I maintain always that my best human relations agent is that minority person on the job."

Jeffery A. Moss

Adding a minority group professional educator to the staff of the school district can have a strong, positive impact on the educational program. For students, parents, staff and community, there will be an opportunity to see a Black, Chicano, Asian or American Indian serve in a leadership role. This personal encounter in the schools may be the first time the white child or adult has seen a minority group person in a role other than a subservient one, or in the media.

The minority staff member can be actively involved in making presentations on educational and other subjects of general interest. Don't make the mistake of using the minority person only on matters of racial, religious, or ethnic concerns. Through the creative use of minority staff personnel, school

systems can both improve human relations and enrich the curriculum.

9. The school district should undertake a human relations program in the district that addresses itself to group problems.

> *"My other function is human relations in the district. And of course, right away before school got started, we had a human relations workshop for all administrators. This also began to give us better working tools. We are trying to serve each school staff in the human relations area."*
>
> *Jeffery A. Moss*

Most experts in the field seem to arrive at the view that problems in so-called race relations are really problems in the broader realm of human relations. Our question, then, is this: What can the superintendent do to provide in-service education for staff members so that improved human relations can occur?

Once you have begun to recruit and employ minority staff persons, you should begin a program of human relations workshops addressed to group problems. As with other workshops, your groups should be relatively small, building unit or smaller; should include planning input from participants; and should relate, at least in part, to the needs as perceived by the participants.

A needs assessment in a building or system may reveal some of the following:

a. New minority probationary teachers feel isolated. A workshop may help older faculty members recall their feelings when they were probationary teachers. The problems are seen to cut across racial and ethnic lines.

b. White teachers and parents hold cultural biases negative to the dialects that a Black or Chicano teacher uses. A workshop may reveal other kinds of cultural biases which often convey a sense of superiority on the part of the majority teachers, rather than a sense of respect for mutual differences. Examples are different preferences for dress or hair styles.

c. White teachers can often be assisted to understand that the very language they use may convey insensitivity to others. For example, most Black persons are pained by the term "colored," which to them has become a code word that conveys white racism, even if it is not intended. Once white teachers or principals know how some words or actions are received, they can modify their language and behavior to convey sensitivity rather than the opposite.

d. A human relations workshop on institutional bias may help to illustrate how the social, political, and economic power structures in a community influence the race or cultural bias of the schools. For example, the white leaders of church, bank, and Chamber of Commerce are usually elected to the school board and thus reflect their cultural biases. A workshop may help us to understand these factors so that we can deal with them more effectively.

10. The school district should set as its ultimate goal the acceptance of people as human beings and not as minority group members.

"My belief is that there is but one race the human race, because if we start talking about races, then we begin to think of people as being in the pale of humanity or out of the pale of humanity."

"People don't get any points for being white, people don't get any demerits for being white. They get points when they are good people, humanizing people, intelligent people. They get demerits when they're dehumanizing . . . The same goes for human beings with black pigmentation. They get no points because they are Black. They get points because they're good people who happen to be Black."

Joseph Billingsley
Legislative Agent
Michigan Federation of Teachers
M.A.S.A. Hearing, January 31, 1973

It should be kept in mind that if one has prejudice toward a minority person, one does not look upon that person as a fellow human being. Here again, the superintendent must impress upon the

staff that everyone is going to be treated with the same standards, and it is necessary that each employee respect the rights and dignity of fellow employees.

It is not enough to announce the goal to be attained. It should be set down in writing, as part of the policy, the practical steps that will be taken to bring about the desired goal.

Minority persons want nothing more nor less than to be dealt with as individuals, as individuals with racial or ethnic identity and pride to be sure, but always as individuals first and as minority individuals only as one dimension of that individuality.

The Social Issues Committee wishes to acknowledge the leadership of Don R. Shader, who as president of Michigan Association of School Administrators in 1973-74, initiated the formation of the Committee. It wishes also to thank George Ruwitch, current president; Austin F. Bates, past executive secretary; and Donald M. Currie, current executive secretary, for their continued encouragement and support; and Pat Canning, M.A.S.A. secretary, for providing secretarial services to the Committee.

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